



Tentenublo 2018 Rioja “Xérico” Tinto

Region: Rioja (Rioja Alavesa)

Village: Viñaspre

Agriculture: Organic

Soils: Calcareous

Varieties: 85% Tempranillo, 15% Viura

Harvest: 29 September - 25 October

Vinification: Fermented by parcel with native yeasts in concrete tanks with 20% whole clusters, short macerations, light punchdowns; MLF and aging in concrete tank for 9 months (18mg/L TOTAL SO₂)

Production: 25,950 bottles

Roberto Oliván and Leyre Ruiz of Tentenublo make honoring tradition look radical. A fourth-generation winemaker, Roberto farms 10 hectares composed of 30 parcels of vines in and around his and Leyre’s home village of Viñaspre, in Álava province. This is the Basque part of Rioja -- the Rioja Alavesa. The vineyards contain a traditional mix of local red and white grapes: Tempranillo, Garnacha, Malvasía Riojana, Jaén Blanco, Viura, and more, planted on some of Rioja’s most interesting terroirs. They produce a unique and personal lineup that channel the energy and history of the land into long, laser-focused wines full of bright fruit, fresh earth, and pulsating mineral power.

Viñaspre sits high in the rugged foothills abutting the Sierra de Cantabria mountain range, and was historically an important village in the wine trade, due to its location on the road to Bilbao. The vineyards profit from extra altitude (up to 700 meters) and compelling geology, but are exposed to the winds, rains, and extreme conditions that are typical of mountain viticultural zones. *Tentenublo* is the local name for the ringing of bells meant to ward off hail storms.

All vineyards are farmed organically and vinified separately. Tentenublo’s red wines always contain white grapes, which Roberto says adds a “chaotic” sensation to the center of the palate. For wine lovers who were reared on the mature, long-aged Riojas that dominate both the commercial market and popular understanding of the category, Tentenublo’s take on Rioja feels revolutionary. Returning the focus to the soil, vinifying red and white grapes together by parcel and terroir, and bottling taut, energetic wines in place of the famous oxygen- and oak-inflected blends that embody Rioja’s style presents a sizable risk to a small family winery. Tentenublo’s delectable defiance of the global wine market’s expectations makes this historic category even richer.

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Xérico is an old-fashioned style of light and refreshing young red Rioja, made in homage to the the four generations of growers who have cared for Tentenublo’s land: Teodoro, Félix, Ignacio, and Roberto. 85% Tempranillo and 15% Viura from 15-50 year-old, head-trained vines planted at 550-700 meters altitude on eroded slopes of calcareous marls (*Xeric Torriorthent* soil type, hence ‘Xérico’) in four vineyards: El Pedrón, La Entrada, Majadonda, La Fuente Colas.

Grapes from each parcel are foot-trodden, fermented parcel-by-parcel in concrete tanks with an average of 20% whole clusters, and macerated for 10-12 days with gentle punch-downs. Each tank of wine is pressed and aged individually in concrete tank for 7 months. The wines are then blended in a large concrete tank and allowed to harmonize for two months before bottling.